

## Detailed Progress Report 2023

### Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy Actions to have completed by 31 March 2023.

| Task Number                 | Action  | Progress    | Outcomes  |        |
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| <b>Objective 1</b>          |   |             |   |        |
| 1.2.1                       | <b>Housing waiting list as early prevention tool</b><br>Ensure the housing register application and assessment process include mandatory identification of applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and automatically refer to Homelessness Services to provide prevention/relief support to those identified.                          | Complete    | The housing register application forms includes a tick box for applicants who are homeless, at risk of or threatened with homelessness to complete. The homeless prevention team received electronic alert on their digital dashboard and the case appears for the team to contact the applicant to offer prevention support.   |        |
| 1.2.2                       | Identify through housing register applicants who are not eligible for housing association accommodation due to housing association (HA) lettings policies and provide advice/prevention/relief support or signpost to other services.   | Complete    | Task identified a variation in HA policies about rent arrears, unacceptable behaviour and homelessness. Case by case liaison between the service and HAs is good. Actions implemented: expand guidance about rent arrears and unacceptable behaviour in the council's housing allocation policy; strengthen routine joint management and monitoring of homeless clients in TA to be tenancy ready, and electronic tracking and management of void properties.   |        |
| 1.4.1                       | Improve joint working with mental health and public health services to prevent homelessness, especially people who misuse alcohol and/or drugs.   | Underway    | Prevention work has focussed on operational essentials initially. New posts now in place (mental health housing officer and offender housing officer) will support the development of this task and have strengthened partnership working with health and probation as well as early prevention support for clients. An initial review of current support via the Reach Out Programme, The Lantern and the Homeless Health team has started.  | Oct-23 |
| 1.4.2                       | Improve joint working with diversity and inclusion services to review and mitigate challenges and ensure suitable support is available to households with protected characteristics.  | Not started | Initial engagement with the local Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group has taken place as part of the development of the new housing strategy. Findings from this work will form part of this task.  | Mar-24 |
| <b>Objective 2</b>          |   |             |   |        |
| <b>Prevent Homelessness</b> |   |             |   |        |
| 2.2.1                       | Review homelessness cases that move from the prevention stage to the relief stage, and to the main duty stage. Map the flow from the prevention duty owed stage to other stages to determine why households move through the stages to establish any trends, including household type or location, that require specialist support to prevent homelessness. | Complete    | Prevention cases have been reviewed and mapped. The top 2 reasons for failed prevention are: landlord selling/ending tenancy and family breakdown/asked to leave. New tools have been configured to track the flow from prevention onward and monitor reasons for unsuccessful prevention. The review identified some data recategorisation was required which is complete. We identified additional staff training about data recording and awareness which has been implemented. We will develop a new BI dashboard to illustrate the flow and provide additional monitoring. |        |

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| 2.2.2 | Capture homelessness prevention outcomes achieved by all stakeholders, including Dorset Council, to inform a strategic approach to prevention. This includes early prevention activity that has not been commissioned as a homelessness prevention service, (e.g. housing association tenancy support, DWP employment support, money advice workshops at food banks, etc.)  | Underway | Prevention outcomes achieved by Dorset Council is complete and being monitored. Next steps - to review other early prevention activity as listed.   | Mar-24 |
| 2.2.3 | Duplicate of 2.2.1 to be removed  | N/A      | N/A   |        |
| 2.3.1 | Review commissioned services to ensure best practice and achieve improved value for money in priority areas. Matching services to identified need to provide greater financial security to a wider range of organisations who provide services within Dorset.   | Underway | We have commissioned with Citizens Advice to create a dedicated income maximisation worker to respond to cost of living pressures. We are also working with the directorate's commissioning team to review and recommission the Dorset Integrated Prevention and Support Services in autumn 2023. Linked to completion of task 2.2.2  | Mar-24 |
| 2.3.2 | Review existing arrangements with criminal justice agencies and agree a joint pathway with to prevent offenders becoming homeless following release from all secure estates. Consider carrying out case reviews of a selection of cases over last 12 to 18 months in all areas.   | Complete | Outcomes: Secured funding for a 3-year, fixed term Criminal Justice Housing Officer (via Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and the Probation Service) who will provide a dedicated point of contact to support those leaving Prison; created a specialist Prison Release Panel, which meets monthly to look upstream at those being released to ensure smoother transitions into the community; reviewed the 'Duty to Refer' data to ensure the statutory requirement to refer cases to the Local Authority is happening consistently and effectively; secured funding, via the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO) scheme, to provide a 2 year Tenancy Sustainment Officer, as well as funds for an enhanced Landlord incentive package for this cohort of customers. |        |
| 2.3.3 | Review existing arrangements of the joint work to update how care leavers and other young people are prevented from becoming homeless, including: a) updating the 16 /17 year olds protocol to include any new legislative developments; b) building on the key trained officer role within housing to develop a champions role in each service where joint cases can be administered; c) Take up co-location opportunities to maximise benefit to service user | Complete | Outcomes: a) delivered a new joint Care Leaver protocol b) delivered a new 16/17 year old protocol c) delivered new dedicated web page for homelessness and young people d) planned training for both housing and children's services to improve joint working and understanding of the client group. We are also opening up housing surgeries in customer access points across the area and at The Lantern/veteran's projects/refuges. We will also be working from a new care leavers accommodation site in Weymouth that opened recently. We have recently agreed a Care Leavers' Housing Officer to work as a hybrid role to cover tenancy sustainment for care leavers and also a housing officer - we are currently recruiting to that role.                      |        |

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| 2.3.4 | Review homeless prevention activities available to members or former members of the Armed Forces and ways of identifying former serving personnel to raise awareness of and refer to the specialist support available.   | Complete    | The number of homeless households that meet the definition of service personnel is very low. We have created a dedicated webpage for veterans with significant signposting and support available for households leaving service accommodation and/or those facing homelessness. We have also provided guidance to staff on the meaning of the Armed Forces Covenant and liaised directly with Veteran's representatives in the creation of our webpage to ensure it was an inclusive of local services as possible.  |         |
| 2.3.5 | Adopt a Homeless from Hospital Discharge Policy to prevent patients from becoming homeless when leaving acute and mental health hospitals.   | Underway    | Hospital discharge policy exists and under review by directorate. Housing service is providing feedback to improve homeless prevention element - ongoing.  | Mar-24  |
| 2.3.6 | Explore opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group for a multi-disciplinary approach.   | Underway    | We worked with Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHC) and the Housing Association's Charitable Trust (HACT) around working with housing associations in Dorset in the way they deliver their mental health services, a summary was provided by HACT with recommendations. One of the recommendations was to embed housing expertise into mental health services and teams. Delivery has started with a new housing mental health worker at Forston and St Annes. A new homeless health strategy has been drafted by NHS and is pending approval. Opportunities to be explored via integrated care board (ICB) | Ongoing |
| 2.4.1 | Review social landlord activity against the Dorset Tenancy Strategy, then carry forward the findings to formulate a new tenancy strategy.  | Not Started | Delayed due to other operational priorities. To be delivered in 2023/24  | Mar-24  |
| 2.4.2 | Develop an early warning system for tenancies coming to an end in a) the social sector and b) the private sector   | Not Started | To be undertaken after 2.4.1 is complete   | Oct-23  |
| 2.5.1 | Research and analyse local patterns of and reasons for rough sleeping and rough sleeper service provision with neighbouring counties to ensure: a) appropriate services and accommodation are in place locally to support rough sleepers; b) reduce the transience of rough sleepers and help to prevent rough sleeping; c) rough sleeper action plan is updated | Underway    | Data analytics in progress at local level. Assertive outreach data reviewed street contacts between October 2021 and October 2022; user research complete to understand reasons for rough sleeping and their journey; we used the data to successfully bid for £1.5 million grant for a 3 year period; the data has been used to submit a first bid to government in the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme - identifying additional accommodation and support at two local sites and await the outcome; used the data to write and publish a new ' <b>Ending Rough Sleeping Accommodation Plan</b> '.                    | Mar-24  |

### Objective 3

#### Arrange suitable accommodation for everyone

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| 3.1.1              | Formulate housing strategy that prioritises: a) increasing the supply of affordable housing, including one-bedroom accommodation suitable for single people with complex needs; b) maximise the potential of the private rented sector across Dorset; c) bringing empty homes back into use; d) rough sleepers or with temporary housing solutions due to end. | Underway    | The housing strategy is now scheduled to be presented to full council in December 2023. The draft and consultation plans are being considered at People and Health Overview in June 2023.                                       | New completion date December 2023 |
| 3.2.1              | Undertake a strategic review of all temporary accommodation including an options appraisal into future TA arrangements, including private sector leasing and use findings to update policy for how temporary accommodation will be procured and allocated.   | Underway    | A review of TA conditions, location, costs, legal arrangements has commenced. Resource capacity has impacted on the project.  | Mar-24                            |
| 3.2.2              | Adopt a new temporary accommodation placement policy which includes information to the service user on costs of the accommodation, the standards, the level of housing management and any support they can expect as early as possible.  | Not started | Delayed due to operational priorities.  | Mar-24                            |
| 3.3.1              | Develop pre-tenancy training and a qualification to equip households to become tenancy ready, including saving for rent in advance, resolving former tenancy debts or demonstrating sustained improvement in behaviour which would normally be a barrier to being offered a tenancy.   | Not started | Shared early learning and examples with children's service to see if this could benefit from a joint approach. Planned provision is different and requires bespoke solution to be created.                                      | Sep-24                            |
| <b>Objective 4</b> | <b>Support households to retain their accommodation</b>  |             |   |                                   |
| 4.2.1              | Complete a housing needs and gap analysis for properties where support is provided, to better understand whether current provision reflects the needs of actual and potential users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness   | Underway    | the vast majority of supported accommodation is dedicated to rough sleeping households with a very small amount available to households with no rough sleeping background. Task 2.5.1 is in progress to review of this support. | Mar-24                            |

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| 4.2.2 | Agree a method for carrying out performance inspections of support services that benefit people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to understand if collaboration, co-location or other partnership initiatives would improve performance and outcomes of these services. | Underway | A new post - Rough Sleeping Initiative Co-ordinator, is now in place and includes management of the support service contracts for rough sleeping households and associated key performance indicators. Feedback has been acted upon to co-locate and the homeless service is due to start housing surgeries in customer access locations across the area shortly. Support services all co-locate via the Lantern Hub (except The Bus) in Weymouth. The remainder of the task continues. | Mar-24 |
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| 4.2.3 | Develop a series of prevention, relief and support initiatives that will benefit people who otherwise would remain in unsupported temporary accommodation or 'sofa surfing' as hidden homeless. | Underway | 3 new Tenancy Sustainment Officers are in post working upstream with households not yet homeless. We offer support by negotiating with landlords, arranging payment plans, conducting home visits in the case of parental eviction and to mediate to create solutions widely. The teams' remit is entirely preventative to help struggling households to meet their long-term housing needs, manage affordability and support them to remain living where they are (as long as it is suitable). We support households to access the Household Support Grant funding of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for local authorities to help with the costs of eating and heating. The team work closely with the Citizens Advice and we have funded a housing benefit/debt worker within the Citizens Advice Income Max Project to help households with budgeting and to manage and prioritise their finances. We have analysed our data and know that family/friends evictions are a significant reason for homeless approaches in the local area due to relationship breakdowns, overcrowding pressures or changes in circumstances e.g. pregnancy. Further case audits are being undertaken to unpick the household's last accommodation to identify any masking of the end of ASTs by temporary moves to family/friend accommodation. Increased home visits will be part of this work but the rural nature of the local area and the intensive resources required are expected to be impactful and require support. | Dec-23 |
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**Objective 5                      Suitably resource activities for tackling homelessness**

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| 5.1.1 | Ensure staff levels are sufficient to administer statutory homeless duties and deliver activities identified. | Complete | Restructure completed July 2022. New posts created were: 1.4 FTE Housing Officer. Since the restructure additional posts focussed on pre-prevention and to build capacity to respond to increase demand have been created using other funding including NHS, Probation, Rough Sleeper Initiative and Homeless Prevention Grant. They are: 3 x Tenancy Sustainment Officers; 2 x Refugee Housing Officers; 1 x Offender Housing Officer; 1 x Mental Health Housing Officer; 2 x Domestic Abuse Housing Officers. This will need to be kept under constant review given the increased service demands. |
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| 5.1.2 | Procure and implement a new housing software system that can deliver the necessary functionality to deliver the requirements of the Housing Service. | Complete    | New software was implemented for homelessness in January 2022. Initial design of homeless functions were completed to enable homeless services to operate. the software links with a new suite of accessible letters for service users. This suite is not yet completed. Linked webpages including referral forms and shortened customer friendly homeless applications have been implemented. A new customer portal has been implemented providing a dashboard for service users and officers to interact and a new SMS functionality has been introduced for customers to receive short messages from the service. We agree to carry out a full service re-design process and update any software configuration based on these findings. The first phase included engagement and feedback with service users and professional partner organisations. These findings have been shared and phase 2 is due to commence in 2023 to scope new/additional software requirements to improve efficiency and ease of use for all service users. |        |
| 5.1.3 | Explore Care Act funding opportunities with Clinical Commissioning Group   | Not started | There has been progress organically because the directorate is one. The two services are working together around hospital discharges and homelessness, some training has been provided by the homeless service for colleagues in Adult Social Care (ASC) to understand their roles and responsibilities, each service area shares learning and is able to attend webinar sessions delivered to update on new initiatives and developments routinely. Joint working groups exist to ensure consideration of housing matters are included in several ASC ventures. A formal task now needs to follow up on this initial work to identify areas of development and will commence in 2023.   | Dec-23 |

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| 5.2.1 | <p>Develop effective performance management arrangements through: a) regular auditing of performance information such as HCLIC. b) consistent application of appropriate quality assurance programmes. c) benchmarking the range and success of activities in place to prevent homelessness with other local authorities. d) monitoring and reporting on outcomes against each funding stream, including case studies in reporting. e) carrying out cost benefit analysis of activity within each programme to test value for money. f) the use of peer review assessments. g) form a benchmarking club with like housing authorities, potentially BCP and Wiltshire to: support the development of effective performance management; improvement; share staff training curriculum; external peer audit function for regular casework audits and independent file reviews.</p> | Complete | <p>Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) is reviewed by the homeless service on a monthly basis. DLUHC delivered enhanced training to our homeless officers to improve data input quality as an outcome of other work at tasks 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. The service flexibly reviews data when working on specific trends and benchmarks against Wiltshire because of similarities in geographical, demographic and homeless issues. We have added data inputting into our auditing programme. BCP is not a suitable benchmarking partner because the nature of their service users is different. We compare with Wiltshire and members of a group including other similar housing authorities operated by DLUHC. Monitoring of outcomes from the Homeless Prevention Grant spend is in place and will be included in future annual reviews to demonstrate value for money. Spot check peer reviews and case auditing is used to examine specific issues as required by the service.</p> |
| 5.3.1 | <p>Review all operational policies, procedures, and paperwork associated with administering the homelessness service from the perspective of the merged council services and the new duties arising from the HRA17</p>   | Complete | <p>New service manager for homelessness undertook review and implented required changes, provided additional training and increased resources. Service complies with HRA2017 duties.</p>  |

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| 5.3.2 | <p>Develop a comprehensive training programme including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. induction for new homelessness and housing allocations staff,</li> <li>2. 12 month programme in housing and homelessness policy, practice and law for those new to the housing service,</li> <li>3. regular refresher training for homelessness and allocations assessment officers</li> <li>4. additional regular training for all staff covering case law and other legislative updates training</li> <li>5. best practice and new initiatives updates training</li> <li>6. ICT and monitoring systems training for all system users</li> <li>7. Specialised training for those managing the monitoring and reporting of H-CLIC Budget: Within existing resources People: Project manager homelessness &amp; improvements; Homelessness officers; Housing allocations officers; Housing solutions lead; Service users; Budget: Training budget; Officer time for training People: Service manager for homelessness prevention &amp; housing advice; Homeless team leaders; Service manager for housing solutions; Housing benefits lead; Housing association lead; Adult services; Children's services; Service users; Diversity &amp; Inclusion lead; Service Manager for Homelessness Prevention &amp; Housing Advice Service Manager for Housing Strategy April 2022 Programme in place March 2022 26 No Action Resources Required Lead Officer Timescale: Progress and other data to ensure that evidence is always accurate and current to provide for evidence-based decision making.</li> <li>8. Housing benefit regulations and practice annual update training from Housing Benefits Team.</li> <li>9. Internal training programme for internal services e.g. Adult and Children's</li> </ol> | Complete    | <p>Training programme arranged and commenced using internal resources, external resources, other local authority resources; ICT system training provided by service specialist; available on line; regular updates available; HCLIC training completed via DLUHC</p> |
| 5.4.1 | <p>Through the established homelessness forum, harness stakeholder enthusiasm and resources for tackling homelessness by carrying out cost benefit analyses and joint bidding for external funding.</p>   | Not started | <p>First homelessness forum is scheduled for 2023. This work will commence after that.</p>   |



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| 5.4.2 | <p>Seek out feedback from service users to ensure their knowledge helps to shape policy and practice. 1) during the provision of the service at regular points such as initial assessment, placement in temporary accommodation etc. 2) through regular customer satisfaction consultation including an annual consultation exercise which includes stakeholders 3) through an annual event, at which users of homelessness services are invited to put questions to key decision makers about what works well and what could work better during the provision of the service</p> | Underway | <p>Phase 1 of project to review homeless service is complete including feedback from service users. Phase 2 of the project will commence July 2023 to implement identified process and ICT enhancements. Phase 3 will establish points 2 &amp; 3 to monitor customer satisfaction.</p> |
| 5.4.3 | <p>Develop a process for feedback and complaints from service users to be cascaded to the homelessness and housing advice team. Consider any training needs or changes to processes if required.</p>  | Complete | <p>Senior Housing Review Officer collates and provides feedback and insights via Service Development Group – training requirements are identified and implemented by relevant service leads.</p>   |